

Day of Solidarity with the Cuban People

Background:

At an April 7, 2007 conference on Cuba in Miami, Commerce Secretary and co-chair of the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba Carlos Gutierrez announced that the USG would sponsor a "Day of Solidarity with the Cuban People" in the United States on May 21. The purpose of this event is to promote peaceful democratic change in Cuba by showing broad international support for the Cuban people.

The President of the United States will host an event on May 21 in support of a "Day of Solidarity with the Cuban People" to focus on the plight of prisoners of conscience and the lack of civil and political freedoms.

This date coincides with a period when Cubans all over the island commemorate Cuban patriots who have suffered at the hands of the regime for the cause of freedom and human rights, including the anniversary of the death of Pedro Luis Boitel, a poet-activist who died on May 25, 1972 at age 39 while on a hunger strike in Cuba's "Castle of the Prince" prison.

Cuba remains a nation where the people are denied the most basic freedoms and opportunities, freedoms that governments in our hemisphere, except for Cuba, have agreed to honor and defend in the Inter-American Democratic Charter, and much of the world community, including Cuba, has promised to honor through the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights.

We will call on the Cuban regime to allow its citizens to exercise these internationally recognized civil and political rights and freedoms and unleash the potential of the Cuban people to give them an opportunity to enjoy the fruits of democracy and the benefits of a 21st century economy.

United States policy remains clear and strong: we seek a free, just, prosperous, and sovereign Cuba to join the community of democracies in the Americas. We want the Cuban people to freely and democratically define their country's destiny.

Further reading:

President Bush's May 7, 2008 speech:

<http://havana.usinterestsection.gov/uploads/images/nVMDchl2mCTKrEAuVCO6kQ/bushcouncil0508e.pdf>

Secretary Rice's May 7, 2008 speech:

<http://havana.usinterestsection.gov/uploads/images/E5HhoSBugPDpuXGL452xVw/Ricecouncil0508e.pdf>

For more information:

<http://havana.usinterestsection.gov/>

<http://www.solidaridadcuba.org/eng/index.php>